



Home

Featured Homes

Gardens

Lifestyle

Tours

Competitions

Digital

More

Blog • Coupons • Events • Cooking School Sign-Up • Relocating in KC

Bottoms to Top

Photographer: Matt Kocourek **Author:** Brooke Pearl



Wed, 12/14/2011 - 15:41

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1 of 16

When Amber Arnett-Bequeaith invited me to spend the day with her in the West Bottoms, which is, as most of you know, a light industrial area and one of the oldest in the city, I thought I knew what to expect. But it was so much more — a hub of activity with tons of shopping venues; a self-sufficient destination for hundreds of travelers, both local and statewide; friendly faces; and local to a fault — *this* is the West Bottoms.

Arnett-Bequeaith, vice president of [Full Moon Productions](#) (yes, the haunted houses), Group Real Estate and the [West Bottoms Business District Association](#), led me from one local shop to the next with her uncle, Monty Summers, president of the three aforementioned organizations. This area of town, this community, is a fully functioning “city” in itself, implementing initiatives for safety, cleanliness and economic development, among others. And, it boasts the lowest crime rate in KC.

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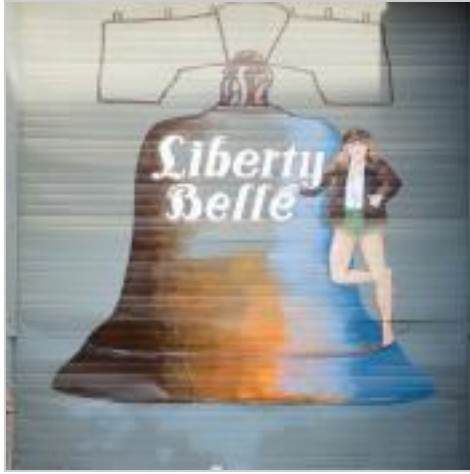
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Logistics aside, this historic area houses artists' studios, quaint shops, local restaurants, and a range of home and business services. It was enough to make me want to stay for the entire day...and return again soon. Liberty Belle, Bella Patina and Good Juju are three local shops that open to the public on the first weekend of every month — and they're crazy busy every one of those days. These shops feature vintage, antique and repurposed furniture, decorations and embellishments — you'll find anything you've ever wanted and then some. The Fleeting Flea, Bottoms Up and Architectural Reclamation Foundation are a few other local stores that carry more vintage finds, architectural salvage and home accessories.

During our stroll along 12th Street, we stopped into Jaskki's Tobacco Café, where I had a delicious mocha; also featured is work from local artists and a Smoking Lounge Menu, too, if that interests you. After an all-day shop-a-thon, it's nice to take a load off at any of the area restaurants, like Jerry's Woodswether Café (which I hear is greasy but fantastic!); Golden Ox, a staple in the area; and the hip R Bar. Or maybe all you need is a quick pick-me-up, and for that I'll be going to Amigoni Urban Winery. Sometimes, however, we need a little more help than a repurposed dresser can give, which is where the area's home-service companies come into play, such as Quality Roofing, Cook Bros Insulation or CAS Woodworks (Arnett-Bequeaith has a custom kitchen island created by them). If it's not your home but a body makeover you're after, try Cardio Boxing by Aaron Blake or Pole Worx (something I've always wanted to try) to whip you into shape.

After one trip, you'll notice how the West Bottoms is like one big happy

family, where everyone bands together in support of each other, but maybe I'm biased because I'm from a small town myself and appreciate the camaraderie.

Either way, check it out to decide for yourself. And, keep your eyes peeled; sources say we might be seeing more "activity" in the future. Find out all you can on the West Bottoms at westbottoms.com.

Fun Fact

The Guinness Book of World Records recently visited the West Bottoms to add Full Moon Productions to the list as housing the largest snake in captivity in the world.



Businesses in the West Bottoms

Art /Galleries

Blue Djinn Art Gallery

Dolphin Gallery

Green Door Gallery

Business/Home Services

Adamstree

Construction

All Packaging Co.

Avis Furniture Co.

Baker Medlock

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Full Moon

Productions/

Group Real Estate

Exercise

Cardio Boxing by

Aaron Blake

Pole Worx

Jaskki's Tobacco Café

The R Bar

Restaurant Depot

Jerry's Woodswether Café

Shopping

Another Look (costumes)

Bella Patina

Bottoms Up

Central Bag Co.

Doc's Caboose

Foundation Architectural

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